

08/26/2020

Greetings to Mansfield and E.O. Smith Families!

A very warm welcome from Food Services to the beginning of the 2020-2021 school year! We hope you were all able to enjoy a little bit of summer despite the COVID-19 pandemic. After serving 30,245 meals to families from March to June, Food Services was able to provide an additional 12,558 meals over 6 weeks in July and August. We were truly grateful to be able to serve you.

The following information provides background as to why and how our program is changing operation as we transition from emergency and summer feeding to hybrid model to start this school year. As you may know, Mansfield Public Schools Food Services does not typically qualify for the United States Department of Agriculture's federally funded summer meal programs. When unanticipated school closures began at the onset of COVID-19, the USDA enacted a series of waivers that allowed districts such as Mansfield to operate under their "Seamless Summer Option" program. This allowed us to not only provide meals, but do so for free, to all children under 18, regardless of what town they live in, for pick-up or delivery, in bulk, without students present, and for 7 days per week.

Unfortunately, despite many efforts by school food service programs, supporting organizations, and political leaders across the country, many of the waivers listed above expire on August 31st and will not be renewed. Since any hybrid or remote learning models going into this school year are now planned, the USDA no longer considers the situation as an emergency feeding or "unanticipated" situation.

What does this mean for my family?

- We will begin the school year operating under the USDA's School Breakfast and National School Lunch Programs (the programs we normally operate during a typical school year).
- Only students enrolled in grades K-12 in Mansfield Public Schools or E.O. Smith High School can access meals.

- We will track meals through student's accounts on PowerSchool. Therefore **free, reduced, and paid meal pricing will apply.**
 - Free and reduced meal applications can be found in your student's handbook (K-8), on E.O. Smith's website, or the Food Services website at <https://www.mansfieldct.gov/1595/Lunch-Menus-Online-Payment>.
 - Cash will be accepted to begin, checks made out to Mansfield Food Services, or an online payment can be made through our website.
- Meals provided can only correlate to official school days (no weekend or holiday meals).
- For students participating in the hybrid model and students engaging in 5-day remote learning, meals can still be picked up for the days students are not in school.
 - This process is still emergent and will vary by school. We aim to meet families' needs in the most convenient way possible. **Please complete the survey at <https://forms.gle/1j2Akj4HbDcYHNqo9> as soon as possible so we can begin to coordinate with families at each school.**

Why should we participate in the school's breakfast and lunch programs?

We understand families are under tremendous pressure right now. Please let us take the worry out of breakfasts and lunches on school days, whether in-person or at home! We greatly rely on your support and patronage regardless of free, reduced, paid status, as closure has had a significant impact on our program. Menus will feature plated (not bagged) hot and cold lunch options, the return of our Farm to School program, and a la carte sales at the middle and high school levels. School meal components boast whole grains, reduced sugar, fat, and sodium, and follow federal nutrition guidelines for calories and weekly requirements/limits. We are always willing to meet special dietary needs and will continue to work with families to provide them with these requests. Since meal packing and distribution is occurring at each school (vs. a large central distribution from MMS), we should be able to better tailor meal service and distribution to meet family's needs.

What will in-school meal procedures look like to begin the school year?

Elementary

- Breakfasts and lunches will be delivered to the student's classrooms. Teachers will submit students' lunch choices via a Google sheet. When meals are dropped off to students a check off will occur, ensuring meals are entered correctly into PowerSchool.

Middle School

- There will be two remote grab 'n' go stations for students to obtain breakfast. One will be outside the auditorium, the other next to the hallway that leads to the Library Media Center. There will be no breakfast served in the cafeteria. There will be no a la carte sales during breakfast and breakfast will be cashless (no registers at the remote stations).
- Students will obtain their lunches and a la carte purchases from the cafeteria socially distanced. At least one register will accept cash for the time being.
- Students will tell their name to the cashier, who will scan their information from a printed classroom roster binder. Students will NOT be entering ID numbers into a pin pad.
- Students will return to their classrooms to eat.

High School

- Breakfast and lunch service will occur in the cafeteria as usual. The food court area will be marked for social distancing. There will be one way into the food court, and 3 cashier stations that lead out. At least one register will accept cash for the time being. **Students will be required to present their school ID to a barcode scanner.** Students will NOT be entering ID numbers into a pin pad.

Please reach out for any suggestions, comments, concerns, donations, or dietary needs. The best method of contact is email at foodserve@mansfieldct.org. We hope to see you this summer!

Sincerely,
Mansfield Public School Food Services